Dear Friends,

This is the one time of the year I write an actual letter to all of you! Oh sure, you can check up on the farm’s doings on Facebook and our web site, and occasionally I send out an email missive, but **this is the one true letter**, actually sent the old-fashioned way **through the US mail** that you’ll get delivered right to your home! So grab a cup of hot tea, put your feet up and read about our amazing year here at the farm.

Not so surprisingly, this letter is about the animals here. These beautiful beings mean the world to me. Their personalities, their ability to heal and adapt, and their ways of communicating are incredible. And every single animal has his or her own special friends (both animal and human). For instance, who can know this farm and not be familiar with the inimitable Mr. Newman Goat (now over 17 years old and the animal who has been here the longest). Sigh. He tried again this year—but failed—to convince the local election board that he should be allowed to vote (“give goats the vote” was his slogan...). He used to engage in simpler pursuits such as stealing Waldo’s dinner and breaking into my car. Sweetly the goat has been taking over that role, however, and she’s excelling at it.

We are, after all, a haven for wayward goats. Two very dear sheep arrived this year who have captured everyone’s hearts—Ricardo and Ray Ray, both about 8 months old now. Ricardo was “slow to develop” and Ray was born blind. We took them both in as special-needs sheep. Right now, in fact, Ricardo is in the hospital recovering from a fairly major surgery to his abdomen—and that, of course, is the other side to this joyful life.

Ask any farmer: animals have ways of getting into trouble we could never begin to imagine, and usually this requires very quick action on our parts. Now, I and the volunteers have become quite savvy about basic animal treatments for things such as intestinal upsets, basic exterior wounds, hoof problems, administering shots and pain medication. But when serious problems or even emergencies happen, we have to be ready to do triage, get the vet out, or transport them to the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary Hospital. **This is where you can help. You can make a donation to the farm of $25, $50, $100, or dare I hope, $1000** and know that your money will be used to help these precious animals stay safe and healthy.

Working with animal shelters and rescue groups is very important for our sanctuary; most often they are on the front lines, removing animals from poor and even dangerous conditions. This year we brought animals here from three of these wonderful groups. **Milo** was part of a seizure of a large number of Anatolians from a serious hoarding situation in New Jersey done by Common Sense for Animals. He had lived with sheep and chickens before, and when he arrived here, he looked like he had landed in heaven! He is still very shy with people, but he loves the animals and looks after them all the time.

**Mamie**, an Australian cattle dog/Jack Russell Terrier mix had been churning out babies at a Pennsylvania puppy mill when she was rescued by the Mid-Atlantic Jack Russell Terrier rescue. She is recovering from this abuse, and is now taking herding classes. She likes to try to ply her trade on the farm every day.
Our two new rabbits Don Giovanni and Luc were initially taken in and sheltered by Friends of Rabbits. Sadly, many rabbits find themselves homeless after their ’cute’ and small phase is over. These are two big, beautiful, smart rabbits and we’re so happy to have them here.

Bruno and Salvo are two very lucky horses. They were at the auction and headed for the long ride to slaughter (horse slaughter is illegal in the US and so unwanted horses have to ride to Canada or Mexico to meet their awful end). Denise at Gaited Advocate Intervention Team saw them and felt her heart start to break, knowing that they would not be bought by anyone besides the “kill buyer”. Bruno is blind in one eye and has navicular disease, and Salvo has Cushing’s disease. They actually met on the trailer ride home, and became instant friends. We could not adopt just one of them and leave the other behind, so both are here. Initially quite afraid, they are learning to trust people more and more each day.

When you donate to Star Gazing Farm, you can feel so good that your financial gifts to Star Gazing Farm go to make the difference between life and death; the difference between a painful and wretched existence and a life of comfort and love.

Here are some simple examples of how your funds get put to work here:

- $60 buys an 800 lb round bale of hay. 2-3 of these bales feed our whole herd for one week.
- $50 pays for the farrier to trim Mehitabel the donkey’s hooves (she needs this every 6 weeks—she came here with very serious hoof problems and a badly healed broken ankle).
- $25 pays for a week’s worth of fresh greens for our bunnies.
- $15 fills up our beloved tractor with diesel

We spend on average $17,000 a year on veterinary bills and $15,000 on feed and hay. We have three very part-time people who are integral to the animals’ care; everyone else (including me!) is a volunteer. So there is very little overhead in our budget. When you donate, your money has power here.

A small contingent of our volunteers. It’s hard to get them all in one place at one time!

And our volunteers are amazing! We welcome children starting at age 11 and adults of all ages to get involved, whether that be in shoveling manure on our Saturday workdays, building (and fixing!) fences, knitting, sewing, photographing, drawing, writing, or even tweeting! I’m constantly impressed by the young people who are willing to undertake any task, no matter how dirty or hard it might be, and who are wanting to help and to hug every animal. Their capacity for compassion is so deep. I’m honored to offer them a program where they can start at a young age, build their physical strength and coordination, learn what hard work is, and understand the responsibilities involved in caring for other beings. They also learn to work with people of all ages, from all different backgrounds and, perhaps most extraordinarily, from different schools!

Won’t you donate to help us build that bridge of compassion for young people, who are our future? A gift of $25, $50, $100 or $500—or (as the kids have instructed me to ask, “new barn shovels, please!”)—will make a big difference.

Join our community! Volunteer! Contact me at info@stargazingranch.org
NEW BARN PROJECT

We need another barn, and that is a fact. Bullwinkle, the immense steer, is going on 14 which is quite old, and he suffers from arthritis. Brandy, our Angus cow, is also getting on in years and is having some joint problems especially in her knees. They simply need a larger space that is enclosed and can be heavily bedded. The intention is for this barn to house all of the cows, and to thus give over the older barn to the horses.

We have seed money of $5000 earmarked for this barn, and need only another $3,800 to complete the funding. This includes site preparation and materials, barn construction, and gates. We are so close! With your donation of $100, $250 or (for your name on a barn plaque) $500, you can help our older giant animals keep cozy, warm and safe for the winter. Our builders tell us the barn can be up within 6 weeks!

Among our other arrivals this year and a future resident of the new barn: Carmen the Hereford cow. This little calf had been very sick but the farmer fought hard for her. While she survived, her growth was stunted and she lost most of her eyesight as a result. She has grown a lot but will be a “mini cow” for the rest of her life and we love her just the way she is!

We love to help animals but we also love to help animal-loving people. Our four new goats came here from three different loving families who, in all cases, were suffering medical issues of their own and were desperate to find a safe place for the goats they had raised from babies. Sweetly and Yuki, both 9 years old, are very naughty Pygora goats and Jenny, 13, is lovely but swiftly learning how to be naughty. Old Vinnie, 13, is a gentle Angora goat, with a very special toothy smile! These goats have integrated completely into the “goat gang” here and provide much entertainment and irritation on a daily basis.

I am so extremely grateful to you, our supporters and friends, who contribute to helping each and every one of the animals here at this farm. Your generosity means that we are able to provide high quality food, clean bedding, and excellent veterinary care to these beautiful and deserving creatures. We honestly can’t do it without you. Did you know you can donate monthly? Yes! More and more people are opting to donate a set amount every month—whether $10, or $20, or even $50. This regularity means a lot to us and is perhaps easier on your budget. We have an easy-to-use form to sign up for this on our web site (Click on the “Donate” button). You can also set this up through your bank. Our monthly donors are special because we know we can count on a certain income each month, no matter what the season. It’s a greater security I yearn to have for our animals.

Invitation:

Farm Open House and Holiday Gift Shop

Saturdays, December 15 and 22, 10 am–4 pm
Santa Claus will be here December 22 from 12:30–4!
I was very, very sad to say goodbye to the following animals this past year: Dogs Henry and Ti-gba, our dear sweet cat Tigger, rabbits Oreo and Mae West, Sheep Kimiko, Huckleberry, Rachel, Jane, and Rebecca, Lime the goose, and Mama B the hen. The hardest part of running this sanctuary is loving the animals and then losing them to death. Yet I feel so blessed to have known them and so happy we were able to give them safe and loving sanctuary.

I thank all of you who have so generously given to the farm in the past, and during this holiday season I wish to ask you once again to please remember us in your end of year giving plans. It’s your donations that feed the animals, support the youth programs, pay veterinarians, farriers, and hay suppliers, and ensure that our sanctuary animals have a continued, secure future. Although we work with the local animal control agencies, taking in and helping to place the unwanted and abused farm animals in their care, we receive no government funds and so rely entirely on donations to help the animals.

Won’t you help us by donating, and sharing this with your animal-loving friends? Your donations not only go to feed the rescued animals, they are also feeding young minds and establishing a supportive and loving community. Thank you for caring!

For the love of the animals,

Anne E. Shroeder (Farmer Anne)

P.S. The sanctuary needs your support! Won’t you send your tax-deductible donation of $25, $50, $100, or even $500 today? Thank you.

**Help Star Gazing Farm**

**DESIGNATIONS**

- For animal sponsorship ____________________________ (name of animal)
- In memory of: ____________________________
- In honor of: ____________________________
- I prefer to donate via the Combined Federal Campaign or the United Way (#86412)
- I will donate online on your web site
- Please contact me about planned giving or special designations.

2019 Calendars are in and for sale on our web site. $10 each plus shipping!

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